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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

APPROVED DEB 2/18/59

DATE: February 10, 1959

SUBJECT: Berlin and Related Problems

DECLASSIFIED

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PARTICIPANTS:

The Secretary of State
Willy Brandt, Governing Mayor of Berlin, Berlin, Germany
Wilhelm G. Grewe, German Ambassador
Mr. Martin Hillenbrand - GER
Mrs. Eleanor Lansing Dulles - GER

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The Secretary greeted Mayor Brandt, recalling his conversations with him in Paris and stating that for him to come at this time added a personal note which means a great deal in the consideration of Berlin problems.

Mayor Brandt indicated that he was greatly heartened by the reception here and the strong reaction and support he had found to the importance of standing by Berlin.

The Secretary said he believed his own trip had been useful and even essential. While there are still specific details to be worked out, there was at this time agreement between the four powers which provides a firm basis for the development of detailed plans of action in the working group of experts. He felt an understanding as to what we would and would not do, between the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic and the United States was highly gratifying. He had also had a good conversation with Spaak.

It is now recognized that we mean business, he added, and although the Soviets will keep the pressure on, there is a likelihood that they will withdraw at the last minute.

Brandt stated that he thought the situation very dangerous in the first few weeks for two reasons. First, the Soviets thought they could push the Western Allies out without great difficulty. Second, they expected to upset the economic stability of Berlin.

None
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- 2 -

He said there had been no significant flight of capital. The initial outflow loss of bank deposits had been reversed.

He asked if a date had been set for a conference before May 27.

However, he had proposed a compromise that a conference be held at a time and place mutually agreeable. Thus the Soviets would share the responsibility for the date. He added that, of course, we do not know if the Soviets want a conference at the Foreign Ministers level or on Germany. They may insist on a meeting "at the Summit". If they wish a conference on European security, the matter becomes very complicated with countries other than the four involved, and the Soviets perhaps raising the question of parity.

Further, with regard to access, the Secretary emphasized that there would be no acceptance of substitution for the Soviets at the check points. Some of the planning involves decision on minute details. However, it was agreed there would be no inspection of vehicles and no stamping of documents, only the showing of evidence of identification of the persons and vehicles to officials of the GDR.

The Mayor remarked that this course of action might only postpone the difficulties since before too long they would start something.

The Secretary said that the only question raised so far was the right of Allied troops to remain in Berlin. He queried Brandt as to what he meant - the blowing up of a bridge, road blocks or other physical obstruction ---

Ambassador Grewe said that the position outlined by the Secretary was a good one.

The Secretary, referring to his previous comment as to "no acceptance of substitutions," etc., asked "Is that what you want?" Brandt agreed.

Brandt referred then to the Paris (1949) agreement. He said that these dealt with land and not air access. Now the East German papers have said the commercial air traffic is a misuse of the agreements. He suggested that there might be "an enlargement of interference".

The Secretary agreed the Paris statements covered the "normal civilian access." He thought there would be no immediate trouble if and when the Soviets withdraw, but that "our situation changes." Now, the German civilians deal with the GDR and Soviets only control the military.

Brandt countered that the Soviets were always there as supervisors of the GDR officials.

The Secretary warned that it would be a mistake to anticipate interference with civilian traffic since this might serve to stimulate the Soviets to such action. Now they want the occupying forces to get out.

In any case, the Mayor said, there is no real substitute for US troops. He did not think Egyptians or Mexicans could take their place.

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Secretary Dulles said the United Nations was not like a government. It can act only for and through its members. There have been difficulties on this score in the Far East where the participants did not wish to bear the continuing burden of the UN Mission.

Ambassador Grewe recalled the failure of the guarantee of Danzig under circumstances more favorable than the proposals for Berlin.

The Secretary in concluding the interview said Soviet guarantees had never proved reliable but merely the first step to absorption. He recalled the guarantee to Poland and the way it was taken over with "one swift blow".

Mayor Brandt expressed his appreciation for all the Secretary had done.